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AN
Impartial Account
OF THE
PROPHETS:
7K IN A
Letter to a Friend.



L O N D O N,
Printed, and Sold by John Morphew, near
Stationers-Hall, 1708.

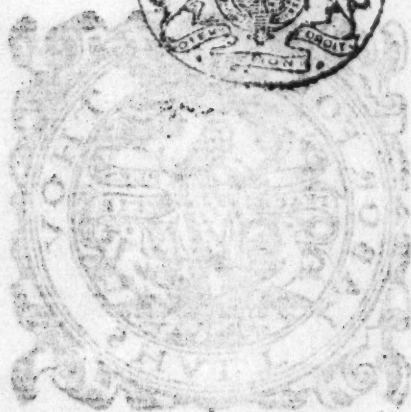
Impartial Account

OF THE

PROPHETS

IN A

Letter to a Friend.



L O N D O N

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Stationers-Hall, 1708.

S I R,

YOU demand of me how I came to think so favourably of the Prophets? since you say, you have been 3 or 4 times amongst them, and met with nothing that could convince you they were of God. In answer thereto, I shall give you the Method I made use of in my Enquiry, and what Reasons I met with to determine my Opinion.

I heard it once press'd by one of the Inspir'd, that every Enquirer after Truth ought to become as a little Child, free from all Prejudice, and of a teachable Disposition; and I and every Man must own, that none are fitly qualified to seek Truth but those that are so.

This being so: And I perceiving in Peoples Enquiries into this Subject, every Man almost came with Prejudices and Prepossessions of his own. It was no Wonder to me that no more met with a Conviction; but the Wonder was on the other side, That so many did.

For the Doctrine it self (though evident in the Scriptures) yet so long a time having elapsed, and this promis'd Kingdom of Christ not having come (though expected in the Apostles Times) has made many to believe it never wou'd come. And to salve the Veracity of God, interpret the plain Promises of it in a Metaphorical Sence. And tho' there has been here and there an Ingenious Man, and a free Thinker, that has endeavour'd to rescue the Truth of God from these perverse Constructions; yet, the Unbelieving side being by much the Majority, having determin'd Truth, as they do Elections, by the greater number of Voices. And those Gentlemen have bore the Brand (as the weaker side in Opinion generally do) of being whimsical or mad. This I say has prejudiced the greatest part of the Clergy, and we know how far their Leaven prevails with the People. And then the very Pretensions to an extraordinary Gift of the Spirit of God, as in the Apostles Times, and to Prophecy, and to the working of Miracles, after our Divines have so

often told the People that there was no manner of necessity for it, nor were they to be expected, is what to be sure has prejudiced against this the majority of Christians, who generally, to save themselves the trouble of thinking and examining, take as Divine Oracles, all that the Pastor tells them from his Pulpit.

When one may as well enquire, whether, since the extraordinary teaching of the Holy Spirit of God is of such exceeding Advantage to the Church, and that the Church had the Gifts extraordinary of the Holy Ghost for almost 300 Years after our Saviour's time amongst them, and he had promis'd it them to the end of the World; it was not their Pride that contemn'd the plain Preaching of the Spirit, and the Degeneracy of Christians that griev'd the Holy Spirit, and caused him to withdraw? And now the Clergy, to have it thought that they are not less in the favour of God than the first Christians were, (tho' they have not this extraordinary Communion with God) perswade the World it is not necessary. But however that may be, 'tis evident by almost each ones Behaviour, that Prophets in these Days, is what they never dream'd of, and what they are unwilling to believe. Tho' why Christians should not have that privilege, as well as the *Jews*, I can't see a Reason; since 'tis evident from Scripture, that Prophecy continued after our Saviour's time, and is by the Apostle, enjoyn'd to be, amongst the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, chiefly desir'd.

And if this State of the Church's Triumph is to come here on Earth, in which the Will of God is to be done, as it is in Heaven, as our Lord order'd us to pray for, I could not see that any thing less than the pouring out of the Spirit of God on all Flesh could bring it to that pass. And therefore thought an impartial Enquiry ought to be made into any thing that looks like a pouring out of the Spirit of God; and the more so, because those that go not forth and meet the Bridegroom, when the Cry is made, Will be for ever excluded the Marriage-Feast.

I having observed an Error in some in their Enquiries into this Subject, that when they had put it on one Foot, and were prest with an Objection that overthrew it there, then they went on solving this Appearance on another Foundation; and when they met with a rub on that foot, danc'd back to the first, and so deceiv'd themselves.

I Resolved to take another Course, and to examine this Appearance under all the Heads I could put it, every one by it self; which I brought to these Four, *viz.*

- 1 Contrivance,
- 2 A Disease,
- 3 Satanical Delusion,
- 4 Or, The Holy Spirit of God.

And I think these 4 Heads comprehend all the Ways under which we can consider it; so I began with Contrivance.

And in my Enquiry on this Head, I first examin'd into the Lives and Characters of the Persons thus pretending to Inspiration; for I was certain that no Conscience less than the most harden'd, could impiously and blasphemously set up to speak by the Holy Spirit of God, as the Prophets did, when at the same time he knew the contrary.

But I found them Men of sober Lives and Conversations, such as heretofore frequented the Assemblies for Religious Worship, Men of good Characters amongst their Neighbours. In short, as far as Man can Judge (that knows not the Heart) pious and devout Christians, and to have the Fear of God before their Eyes.

I then consider'd what might be the Motives that could put Men on such a piece of horrid Impiety; and those I brought to Three, *viz.*

- 1 Ambition,
- 2 Gain,
- 3 Or to serve our Enemy by Embroiling us.

As to the first, I found none amongst the Inspir'd (which are now above 30 that speak) that were ever look'd on to be Men of Ambitious Heads, that could take any great Pleasure in being the Chiefs of a new Party, or that had Abilities for such a Design.

And that some others, not pretending to Inspiration, were the chief Promoters of it underhand; who had Abilities I could see little Reason for.

First, Because they could never be accounted the Chief of a new Sect that are not Preachers in it. For the converted would be apt to reverence the Instruments of their Conversion, rather than a Convert, as themselves, though never so great amongst them.

Secondly, The Doctrine they teach, is the reverse of all Ambitious Designs: For they teach that all shall be immediately taught of God, from the greatest to the least. And consonant to this, there is about 200 that have already the previous Tokens of being Speakers, and the number of them increase daily; so that instead of being a Sect establish'd under one or two Heads (who were to have the Honour of it) it is likely to be a Party of all Heads; which, by the way, evidenc'd this to me, That unless they are cemented and united by the one Spirit, as is pretended, they must of course soon fall to the Ground.

Thirdly, The Instruments chosen were not proper for the work, for they are not crafty cunning Knaves, fit to carry on a Contrivance with a good Grace and Secrecy, but are generally such as have been accounted plain, honest, well-meaning People; some of them Boys and Girls, of 2, 4, 8, 11, and 13 Years of Age; Servant-Maids, and some of them very ignorant, as is evident by their Conversations; which, if a Contrivance, made me believe the Heads not very wise, to trust the Secret with so many, and such as are so very unlikely to keep it.

Now I could not think that some might be impos'd on in this, for (as I shall shew in the 2d Head) every one that is agitated must either be over-ruled by a Superiour Power, or else must know that he does it of himself; and if so, then I must suppose, that of the 200 now agitating their Bodies, there was not one who had in the least the Fear of God before him, which I could not in Christian Charity well allow.

But then I consider'd their Speeches, Prophecies and Exhortations; and though I might imagine some of them of Parts enough to frame such, yet I am certain the greatest part of the Speakers are not; if so, then some wiser Heads must contrive them, and the Speakers learn them by heart. And I took the more Pains to examine into this Matter, because I found all their Discourses, though never two alike, yet all on the same Subject. All conformable to Truth and the Word of God. And though the Speakers had been of different Religions, yet nothing of their old Tenets ever crept into their Discourses: But on the contrary, I have heard some of them, in their Warnings, speak against Opinions that to my Knowledge they have formerly em-

embrac'd. This gave some Umbrage that they might all come from one Forge.

But against this, I found that every particular Person spoke in his or her own Dialect, and exprest the things in the same Terms and Phrases that he or she at other times us'd (conformable to the ancient Prophets, as is manifestly seen in the Difference of *Isaiah's* Stile, who is thought to be a Prince, and that of *Amos* a Cowherd.) Now 'twas such a piece of Difficulty to Frame 2 or 3 Discourses a Day for each one of 20 or 25 People (for I am certain so many of the number must want them) all in their own Dialect, and all different, that I cannot think any two Heads in *Europe* are capable to do it.

But another Difficulty was, that these several Inspired live at Places remote from each other, and it is rare that they all meet together, except at their Publick Assemblies; so I could not well conceive how these several Discourses could with Secrecy be convey'd to each of them every Day.

But supposing all that, yet I found the Capacities of most of the Persons as unable to learn these Discourses off by Heart, and repeat them in a Publick Assembly, without missing a Word, as they were to frame them.

Another Argument against this was, that though some of these pretending to Inspiration, have those about them that narrowly watch their Behaviour, and would be glad to find any such Thing, yet have never either caught the Messenger carrying these Discourses, nor the Persons labouring at them, nor ever found any of their Papers, as ever I could hear of.

But that which is still more against this, is the number of these Speakers increasing so fast, and most of them having 2 or 3, or more Discourses every Day, and all different, without the Framers increase, in like proportion, they can never dispatch the Business. And if the Forgers increase in proportion, then are not their ambitious Designs answer'd.

Well, then being I could not see any great Reason to think it was a Design to gratify any Mens Ambition: I began to consider whether it might not be done for Gain. Because a great number of these Inspir'd, are not in the most flourishing Circumstances.

But

But then the Question was, Whence must the the Pay come from? For though there are some Gentlemen amongst them that are Men of considerable Estates, yet if they could not have an ambitious Design answer'd in it (as I thought it plain they could not) I can't see to what end they should give away their Money.

Besides, 'tis no little matter will do; for there are already 200 that must be in Pay, and the number increasing daily. And we can't suppose that some of them, who are Men of Business, and heretofore of Credit, will forfeit all, run the hazard of their Lives and Reputations, and very likely of their Eternal Welfare, for a small Pension. And any one will find, on a Computation, that 10000^{l.} a Year, divided, would be but a poor Recompence for what they are to undergo for it. But from what *English* Gentleman that 10000^{l.} must come, or for what purpose, I could not see.

Well, then I consider'd with the Mob, supposing the Money come from *France*, or the Court of *Rome*; and these are set on work to imbroid and weaken us at this Critical Juncture of the War.

But against this, I found the principal Persons amongst them to be such as had all their Lives been look'd on as Lovers of their Country, and some of them, such as have appear'd eminent in asserting the Liberty and Property of the Subject, to the hazard of their Lives and Fortunes. Not one amongst them any ways inclining to Popery, but such as all their Lives hitherto, in their Profession of Religion, had appear'd the reverse of it.

But to be set on work by either of these Courts, would require a prodigious Sum. For to be sure these Gentlemen, of 1, 2, 3 and 4000 ^{l.} a Year, that expose themselves amongst them, can't have a less Annual Pension than the Yearly Income of their Estates. And if we look Abroad, we shall see that both *France* and *Rome* may lay out their Money to more advantage.

Besides, this is not a Contrivance of either of those Courts, who never trust their Secrets among so many; and I am apt to believe the Court of *Rome* has found their Interest in fomenting our Divisions so little, that they will hardly be at any great Expence to encourage them.

But against both these Heads of Gain, and a design to Imbroid us, the same Objections, as to carrying on the Work,

Work, started up, as against that of Ambition. So I could not perswade my self that any of these three were the Motives of it.

Another Argument with me against a Contrivance, was to see a little Girl of 4 Years old, have these Agitations very frequently, and in such a manner, as I really thought not in the Power of Nature to perform. But that which further perswaded me to believe them, not natural, was to see a little Child of less than 3 Months old, (I think incapable of being taught) have the like Fits.

So in like manner have I seen some Postures of their Bodies, such as I could not solve by all the Rules of Mechanism. And what had some weight with me to think it not a Contrivance, was to see them all practice in Private, what they professed in Publick, (*Viz.*) A Zeal for God, and his Holiness, and constant Prayer, and Praises to him.

But that which fully determined me in this Point, was their predicting things Miraculous to be wrought, within a determined time by them. And that time very short. And declaring to the World, that if the Power of God, does not before the 29th of April next, attest to the work, they will own themselves deluded.

These Considerations made me believe, as I hope they will you, that the People were in earnest, and that no rascally Design was amongst them.

Then I began to Consider, whether any Disease, or Power in Nature, could make Men thus Speak, and Act.

And in order thereto, I considered it under these several Heads, (*Viz.*)

1. Frenzy or Madness.
2. Enthusiastick Melancholy.
3. Or Epileptic Convulsive Fits.

And these, upon reading what account the Physicians give of them, were all I could consider it under.

The First they say, appears with Rage and Fury. Extravagant, and Mischievous in all their Actions, and Absurd, and Ridiculous in every thing they do.

Therefore I could not possibly think these Persons so, because they appear'd at all times perfectly in their right Minds; always endued with Sense, and Discretion; managed

ed their several Callings with the same Care they usually did, and in all their Actions behav'd themselves with unquestionable Modesty, and Prudence.

Then again the Diseased are always Incoherent, and Unintelligible in their talk, full of Vanity, and ridiculous Affections, (as any one may soon find that Ventures himself in *Bedlam*.) The other, on the contrary, always appearing rational in their Discourses, and ready upon all Occasions to Answer any Question propos'd, with a Complete, and Methodical Answer; gave me but little reason to imagine them so.

So likewise, Madness betrays at all times, by the Visage, and ghastly Countenance, the Distraction, and Fury of the Mind. But I never could perceive the least Difference, or Alteration in the Complexions of the Inspired, even in their Agitations, and that seems the most likely time for it.

Then again, Madness is constantly attended with a Hot Blood, and a quick Irregular Pulse. And I declare, I several times (as any one might) have felt their Pulse, when in the strongest Agitations, (which were with greater Violence than any Madman ever shook himself,) and always found them rather low, than high, and exactly (as near as any one could judge) true, and regular, which demonstrated to me, it was not a Disease.

And tho' it may be said that the most Frantick have some Intervals of Rationality. Yet, finding the Inspired Persons not only rational, between their Extatic Fits, but even in those very Fits, (when they are mostly supposed to be Mad,) to argue with brighter Reason, than out of them; deliver Discourses very Elegant, and Long, ask, or answer Questions, with wonderful Propriety and Wisdom, even exceeding their natural Capacity; it evidently appeared to me the highest Injustice in the World to charge them with Madness, when even in those extatic Fits, which gives the Ground for the Aspersions, they had a greater Portion of Understanding, and Judgment, than the least Mad at the best interval, or any Person that never was accounted so. For I have been with them, when one in an Extatic Fit has ask'd several Questions, the Agitations ceasing till the Person return'd his Answer. Which Rule and Command no Madman as ever I could hear of was capable of Observing.

Besides,

Besides, upon a due Enquiry into the Causes of Madness, as a too close thinking, or impress on the Mind of any miserable Subject, as Love despised, or any Evil feared, or possess'd with; as Poverty, Pride, Disgrace, &c. I could not perceive the least reason to allege any of these Causes to the Persons Inspired, they being such, whose Age, and Circumstances render'd it impossible, as little Children, who know not the Passion of Love, nor once think of Poverty or Disgrace. And on the other Hand the Age, Prudence, Behaviour, and plentiful Fortunes of the rest, destroy'd the least Suspicion of it. And to suppose a Person Mad without any cause is such a supposition as none but a Fool (I thought) would lay claim to.

Well, then I examin'd a little into the 2^d Head, to witt, Euthusiastick Melancholy, and found 'twas observ'd that they always appear'd heavy, and thoughtful, generally full of exceeding ridiculous Notions in most things; but especially of God, and Religion, that they employ'd most of their time in an empty Zeal for, and in the shadow of it. And therefore I met with Conviction enough to satisfy me, that the Inspired Persons could not be rank'd under this Head, because I knew several of them to be Men of quite different Dispositions, and of a brisk lively Constitution, and then the Subject of their several Warnings, or Discourses, (as any one may see) being Orthodox, and Pure; exactly agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and the best Reason. Not the least false Doctrine, or Erroneous Principle taught, or enjoin'd. Nothing but Purity of Life and Manners press'd and inculcated; was sufficient alone to convince me that they had not such whimsical Brains.

But besides, when I had consider'd what Physicians say concerning this Sort of Madness, it then shew'd it self the more unlikely it shou'd be so. Because, they allow it is generally occasioned by Over-thinking, with a previous Disposition of Body, (seldom seen in Men of Labour and Exercise) which increases the same. So that, when their Minds are filled with variety of Thoughts drawn from Study, or their own unsettled Brain, it raises a vain Ambition of forming New Doctrines, and a Fondness of an Intimacy, or Communion with God. Now, I say, I found the Inspired of different Tempers and Constitutions; that some of them were Persons of Labour and Exercise; and

what was of most weight with me, that the several Children (who are utterly incapable of such Studies, or of such designing Ambitious Reflections, and therefore impossible to have this Disease,) were Inspired also.

And upon Enquiry into the 3d and last Head, the Epileptic Convulsive Fits, I found they were always attended with Feavers, or Illness, which oftentimes suddenly prov'd Mortal, always have a disorderly Pulse, the Person full of Pain and Anguish, (if sensible at all) otherwise divested in a manner of Life and Motion, and which (if they recover) frequently deprives them of a great share of the Understanding they had before. So that here needed little more than mentioning them, for a Demonstration to me, that these Persons were not afflicted with this Disease, for they constantly enjoy an entire State of Health, and in their Extatic Fits are as sensible of every Word or Action, spoke or done, as out of them, their Minds perfectly Free and Easie. Their Pulse (as I said before) true and regular, and that violent Motion of Body (as they have severally affirmed to me) easy to them, and affording a Delight.

And indeed it must be so. For one of the Inspired solemnly declared to me, that in the middle of last Summer she was violently agitated, without Intermission from 8 a Clock one Morning, to 2 the next, and as fresh and lively when she came out of them, as before she was seiz'd, which (I thought) nothing but a supernatural Assistance cou'd perform.

And to ascribe the Appearances to the Power of a heighten'd Imagination, I thought very absurd and ridiculous. For all the Operations of Fancy, (however workt up by artful Motives, as Charms, or a prepossess'd Promise of Obtaining any thing desir'd,) the Spring is the Desire of the Soul, and which when raised to its highest Pitch discharges it self, and then Languishes and Falls. But this in every thing appears directly Opposite, gradually increases, and Rises to more and more Perfection. But what put it beyond dispute was the Health, and Circumstances of the Persons, as the Children who know not how to work up their Fancy, or have it workt on. But that which was more and an undoubted evident and demonstrable Proof to me, that it cou'd not be Fancy, was (that since all allow

allow it is workt up by desire of the Person,) that I knew several who earnestly desired the Agitation, and constantly frequented the Assemblies, and yet have them not, and others that never desired them, scarce ever saw them, and yet have been seized; which shewed there was another way of Communication.

But the Assertion that these Motions are catching, seemed more ridiculous to me than the other, for that is supposing it such a Disease as the Plague, Small-pox, Measles, (which surely no Body can be so senseless as to assert) or else, that there are some secret Particles of Matter flying from one Body to another, as is suppos'd in Sympathy, and Antipathy, which is what the best Heads have left undetermin'd; Yet, this I thought we were certain of, that if they Act at all, it was by Agreement, and Similitude of Parts, and if so, it was obviously impossible for two Contraries to agree, and yet they must, if it be suppos'd, that Persons having an Aversion to any thing should be affectingly seiz'd by it.

Neither has yet, as ever I could learn, been any Medicine found out in Nature, that will produce any the like Appearances, without manifestly destroying the Health, if not killing the Person that took it.

But, I soon solyed all these Appearances, and perceived the Folly and Unreasonableness of these Imputations, by a diligent perusal of the Holy Scriptures; for, both in the Old and New Testament, it plainly appears, that there were visible Tokens of the Spirit, when upon or in the Prophets and Apostles; as the Spirit of the Lord came upon me, said the Prophet; which shews the Spirit of the Lord was not always upon him, and that he knew when it was, or was not. And the Spirit on *Saul* was so distinguishable, that those about him knew when it came upon him, and when it left him. *Elisha* is found playing on a Timbrel, to invite as it were, or put his Soul into a fit frame to receive the Spirit, which he wou'd not have done, if it had been always upon him, or if he did not know when it was, or was not. And so the Spirit represented by a Fire in *David's* Tongue, and in *Feremiab's* Bones, which often forced them to speak contrary to their Resolutions, insomuch that they complain'd of an intollerable Burthen, that they were ready to burst with it till vented; plainly

plainly indicated a Power separate and Superiour to their own.

The Prophet that anointed *Jehu* King, had such visible Tokens, as made the Princes that sat with him, ask what that Madman wanted. But the *LXX* renders it plainer in the *Greek*, and calls him an Epileptick Man, that is, What did this shaking Man want with thee, *2 Kings*, Chap. 9. v. 11. and their Translation of the 9th Chapter of *Hosea*, and the 7th Verse, is so plain, that the Prophets had such Extatic shaking Fits, when the Spirit was upon them, that it can no way be evaded; so likewise *Jeremiah* and the rest of the Prophets were esteemed Madmen by the People. *Jer. C. 9. v. 26, 27.* which consequently implied they had some Signs of Madness (and what those Signs are, most know) and indeed, from several Passages in Sacred Writ, they must appear so to a prejudiced Person. As for Instance, *Saul's* lying Naked; *David* dancing before the Ark; *Isaiah* walking through the Streets with his Buttocks bare; *Elisba* and the King of *Israel* a Shooting; *Jeremiah* with a Yoke about his Neck, or hiding his Girdle in the Rock; *Ezekiel* battering in his own Dung, drawing *Jerusalem* on a Tile, and besieging and raising Batteries against it; and *Hosea's* marrying a Common Whore. I say these and such-like, by some, would be thought mad and ridiculous, yet they were the Commands of the Fountain of Knowledge, and, (I don't doubt) carried in them Superlative Wisdom.

And not only in the Old Testament, but in the New, I found that the Apostles, at the Day of *Pentecost*, were by all the People suppos'd Drunk. Now, considering what were the Tokens of a drunken Man, I could not reasonably suppose they lay under that Calumny, for speaking in the Languages of the several Nations; for that must be the effect of Learning and Sobriety. But otherwise, that the Holy Ghost fill'd them with such Joy and Raptures, with such visible Signs on their Bodies, as a shaking and staggering, and by the Impulse of the Spirit forcing them to speak with such Violence, dividing their Words somewhat like the stammering of a drunken Man.

From those Considerations, I thought 'twas reasonable to conclude, that every Person ought to be exceeding cautious how he attributes the Agitations or other Postures of Body of these Inspired Persons, under Consideration, to Madness, lest the Instances produced out of sacred Writ, be

be liable to the same Imputations ; for it is apparent, that whatever may be justly urg'd to solve those Appearances, will equally clear these.

Being therefore, by the before-mentioned Considerations, entirely convinced that the Inspired Persons were neither Impostors, Mad, or Diseased, ——— I then consider'd, whether, allowing them to be honest, sincere, well-meaning Persons, they yet might not be deluded, and so this great Appearance be only a Satanical Delusion ; which, though most commonly objected, yet seem'd to me, upon an Impartial Examination, to be incumbered with the most unsurmountable Difficulties : For in the first place,

I consider'd that Almighty God had in his Holy Word declared himself a Being, jealous of his Honour, and had expressly said, That He would not give his Glory to another. I could not therefore think it reconcileable to the Truth of this Declaration, and the Notions we have of his awful tremendous Majesty, to suppose that he has so long permitted his declared Enemy to assume his Character, to speak in his Name, to receive the Homage and Adorations of his Creatures, even those very Creatures that God himself has declared he made, to render him the Tribute of Praise and Glory.

In the next Place, I consider'd the infinite Mercy and untaxable Goodness of God to his Creatures ; the many affectionate Expressions in the Holy Scriptures, of the good Will that God bears to those that sincerely worship and readily obey Him ; I then consider'd the Conduct of the Believers in this Dispensation, that no worldly Interest, no gainful Prospect, nothing but a just Concern for the Glory of God, and an allowable Care of their Souls, that were the Motives that engaged them in the Enquiry ; I then considered the several Steps they have taken in their Enquiries, that they endeavour'd by all Ways possible to arrive at Truth in this Important Affair, by weighing and impartially considering the Arguments and Objections on both sides, by Conferences with those Friends that were most capable of giving them Satisfaction, by an impartial perusal of the Holy Scriptures, and chiefly by frequently approaching to the Throne of Grace, with a teachable Temper, and Child-like Disposition, to beg the Guidance and Direction of the unerring Spirit of God. When, I say, I had duly con-

sider'd

consider'd these Things, I found it very difficult to allow that the God of unspeakable Goodness and Mercy should deliver up these Honest, Sincere, Well-meaning Christians, into the Hands of the Grand Enemy of Souls, to be thus deluded, and to speak the most horrid Blasphemy, as it must be allowed the speaking in the Person of God is, if what is said be not the Dictates of the Spirit of God; this I thought was giving a Stone, when Bread was ask'd, and a Serpent instead of a Fish; which, *Matth. 7. v. 9, 10, 11.* if as our Saviour justly argues, is not supposable in a Mortal Man to his Child, I thought it must be a strange Prejudice, to allow that our Heavenly Father will do it; for if we, being Evil, know how to give good Gifts unto our Children, how much more shall our Father, which is in Heaven, give good Things unto them that ask him.

In the next place I consider'd, that supposing that God was not jealous of his Honour, and that it was consistent with his Goodness, to deliver up the sincere Enquirers after him and his Ways, to be Tools in the Hands of the Devil; yet I could find but little Reason to believe, that the Devil was now acting a Part quite counter to what he has been doing ever since the the Foundation of the World: He has always made it his Business to tempt and seduce Mankind from the discharge of their Duty; whereas the general Tenour of the Warnings, especially those lately deliver'd have a quite contrary Tendency; they, in a peculiar and beautiful manner display the Kindness and Goodness of God to Mankind; they set forth and skillfully press the great Obligations that Man lies under to his Maker; they represent the Folly and Madness of Man's affronting his God by breaking his Laws; they plainly shew that Man's Interest, both Temporal and Eternal, is necessarily connected with his Duty, and that he cannot neglect the one without the other; they represent the Baseness and Ingratitude of Man's abusing the loving Kindness and Mercy of so good and gracious a Father as God has been to Man, which I consider'd was the most affecting Argument of any, to those that have the least Sense of Ingenuity left. And from the Consideration of these several Arguments, forcibly and pathetically urge a grateful Return from Man to so good and gracious a Father, by a ready Obedience to his

his Will. In short, I could not but observe that frequent Prayer, Fasting, Purity, Holiness, Patience, Temperance, Justice, Humility, Love of God and our Neighbour, an humble Resignation to the Will of God in all Things; and, in short, the whole Scheme of true Christianity were emphatically enforced; which if comply'd with, and there are the most pressing Arguments to enforce the Practice of them, would necessarily destroy the Kingdom of Satan; upon this Occasion, I consider'd our Saviour's reasoning in *Luke, Chap. 11. v. 17. &c.* — and could not but perceive that it was altogether as applicable to this Case, as to that: Which obliged me take notice of the strange prejudice of most Persons; who, though 'tis highly probable that the glorious Kingdom of the Messiah is near approaching, as will appear by what I shall offer by and by; yet will, against Scripture and Reason believe that the Devil himself will possess the Souls of Men, and draw them nearer and nearer unto God, and preach up the pure Precepts of the Gospel, perform the Office of the Fore-runner of Christ coming in his Glory, that he shall be divided against himself, and preach up Righteousness with an extraordinary Force and Energy in one Place, and preach up Wickedness in another; rather than believe, that God should, as 'tis plainly intimated he would, send forth a Voice to bid the World prepare for the coming of the Bridegroom, that they might have time to trim their Lamps, get on their Wedding Garments, and so go in to the Marriage-Feast, the Supper of the Lamb.

I think it not improper in this place, to mention the Condition of a young Woman; who having for some Years been in a despairing Condition, yet has, purely by attending to the Discourses of the Inspired Persons, been brought to entertain favourable Hopes, and comfortable Expectations of the Mercy and Favour of God.

In the next place, in order to form a true Judgment of this matter, I considered what I could recollect from my own Reading, and the Observation of others, in relation to the Behaviour, Carriage, and other Circumstances of Persons possessed by an Evil Spirit. I found that such possessed Persons were always spiteful and malicious to their Neighbours, were ready to do any thing that might harm

their Persons; or ruin their Reputations and Estates; and, in respect to their own Persons, that they were often flung into the Dirt, thrown into the Fire, and hurried to the Commission of such things, as manifestly tended to their Ruin; and that the Things so by them committed, apparently shewed the Nature and Temper of that Spirit that possessed them; whereas, on the contrary, the Spirit that over-rules the Inspired Persons produces quite different Effects; it is generally attended with a Devout Temper of Mind, an Elevation of the Soul to God, an humble Resignation to the Will of God in all Things, and a sincere unaffected Love to their Neighbours; and, in respect to the Body, it leaves it in the same habit and state of Health in which it found it; from whence I thought it was easy to conclude, that the Spirit that over-ruled the Inspired Persons, was not an Evil Spirit, because the Effects it produced were so very different from those Appearances that constantly attend the Possession of the Devil.

In the next place I consider'd those Arguments the Apostles urged as Proofs of their own Inspirations; they mention the Gift of Prophecy, the Gift of Languages, the Gift of Prayer and Praises unto God, the Gift of discerning Spirits, and the Ministration of the same Spirit unto others by laying on of Hands; now 'tis apparent that these Gifts are bestowed upon these Inspired Persons: If therefore we may suppose that God has given the Devil Authority to bestow these Gifts, what hinders us from believing that he may give him a Power also to work Miracles; and if so, what security can we have, that any Revelation which we believe to have been from God, is really so; since, if we so readily allow that God has given the Devil Power to bestow those Gifts just now mentioned, as Proofs of, and Attestations to, his Delusions, what Reason have we to believe that God did not give the Devil that Power in the Apostle's Times; I concluded therefore, that it well became all Persons to be exceeding cautious in this matter, lest, by attributing the Appearances in this Dispensation to a Satanical Delusion, they, more than they are aware of, undermine the Divine Authority of those Writings, which we believe to be, and undoubtedly are, the Revelations of God.

The several Matters I have now mentioned under this Head of Satanical Delusion did appear to me to have a great deal of Force; but I will confess to you, Sir, that what fully determined me in this Point, the force of which I think it impossible for any Man to elude, is what I shall now mention, and so conclude this Head. The Holy Scriptures in many Places mention it as an Attribute proper only to the Almighty, to know the Secrets of Men's Hearts; and, if the Scripture had not been so express in this Particular, I could see but little Reason to believe that any created Being had ever enjoy'd that extensive Privilege. Now the Inspired Persons all unanimously agree, that their mental Prayers have been immediately answer'd by the Mouths of others; that of this the Instances are numerous, and that in such Particulars, as could scarce possibly come within the guess of the most Sagacious created Being; nay, Sir, I do affirm to you, that I my self, though not Inspired, am an Instance of this, for my most Secret Thoughts have in various Instances, and upon different Occasions, been revealed to me by some of the Inspired Persons; from whence I thought I might conclude, that if Scripture is to be depended on, which I hope you do not doubt of, the several Appearances in this Dispensation cannot possibly be accounted for, by allowing it to be a Satanical Delusion.

Having thus examined into it by my Reason, and finding I could not solve the Appearance that way, I resolv'd to bring it to the last and best Test, the already revealed Will of God.

So I considered the Doctrine taught, the Sum of which is this, *viz.*

That God in his Love through Christ Jesus, will restore to Mankind what Man lost by his Corruption and Degeneracy, *viz.* That the whole Creation shall appear in its primitive Beauty, and Man regain the Perfection of Adam; and his immediate Communion with God. And that this great Restoration shall be brought about by the Spirit of God being poured out on all that thirst after it, and the wicked Despisers of it being destroyed with Judgments from off the Face of the Earth.

C 2 And

And looking into the Scriptures, I find it there said, *That we shall regain in Christ, what we lost in Adam.* And I find mighty Things expected at the Time of our Lord's being revealed from Heaven, I find all along in the New Testament, a glorious Kingdom described, and generally called the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven; and I find that this Kingdom was not to take place till our Lord Jesus was again Revealed; and that our Lord taught us to pray daily for it, saying, *Thy Kingdom come, that Thy Will may be done, in Earth, as it is in Heaven,* which shews that it was to be a Kingdom govern'd by the Spirit of God; and that also in it, Man should be restored to his Primitive Purity: Or otherwise the Will of God could not be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.

I found this Glorious State, exactly to Answer all the Ancient Prophecies in the Old Testament, yet unfulfill'd. That thus the Kingdom, and Dominion, *Dan. Chap. 7.* and the Greatness of the Kingdom under the *V. 28. 27.* whole Heaven (according to *Daniel*) would be given to the People of the Saints of the most High, and govern'd by the Lord Jesus. And that the bringing about this Kingdom by the Power of God, answered, that other Prophecy in the same *Dan. 2d. 34.* Prophet, that this Kingdom of God should be *44. 45.* Established, by a Stone cut out of the Mountain without Hands; that thus the Prophecy of *Isa. 1. v.* *Isa. 1. v.* Prophesies that describe a Glorious Reign of *2, &c.* Peace, under the Prince of Peace; in which the Lion and the Lamb shall lie down together, and Spears shall be beat into Pruning Hooks, and Swords into Plow Shares, and Nation no more War against Nation.

In short, I could now see a Noble Theme for those Triumphant Songs, by the Psalmist, and the Prophets celebrating the joyful Reign of the Messiah.

And find how *Joshua*, *David* and *Solomon*, were all, in their several Stations, Types of this Prince that should sit on the Throne of *David*; and how that the Temple of *Solomon*, Built without the noise of Ax or Hammer, was Typical

Typical of this Temple of the Lord, this New *Jerusalem* coming down from Heaven, and the Work of Heaven alone, and not of the noisy Industry of Men.

And how that when the Glory of the Lord fill'd *Solomons* Temple, it drove the Priests out of it, typify'd that in this New Temple of God, which should extend to the utmost Bounds of the Earth, the Lord himself should be the Light thereof, and his Law writ in every Mans Heart, so that he should have no more need to Enquire of his Neighbour, but that every Man should be a Priest unto himself.

This will fulfil that glorious Description given by St. *Peter*, and St. *John*, of a New Heaven, and a New Earth, in which shall dwell Righteousness, and in which all Tears &c. shall be banisht and washed away from our Eyes. And shew how just a Reason the Apostles, and Primitive Christians had to be in a longing, and earnest Expectation of the Lord *Jesus*, to be again revealed from Heaven, in which the whole Creation was to be disburden'd of its Curse, and the Sons of God shine forth, as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

And how we ought all to say with the Spouse of Christ, come, Lord *Jesus*, come quickly.

And that terrible Judgments are to proceed this Triumphant Reign of the Church, I found predicted by all the Prophets that prophesy'd of the Messiah's Kingdom: Setting out, how he should be established on his Throne, with Justice and Judgment, and how he is to tread down his Enemies in his Fury. And a very large Discription given of the Terrors of that day of the Lord, in which he should visit the Earth, for the Sins thereof; and also in the New Testament, by *John* the Baptist; where he says of our Lord, that he should thoroughly purge his Floor, and burn up the Chaff in unquenchable Fire. And that every Tree that brought not forth good Fruit, should be hewn down, and cast into the Fire. And by our Lord himself in that Parable, that at the End of the World the Angels should go forth, and gather the Tares from amongst the Wheat. And that of *Enoch*, how the Lord should come with Ten *Thou.* *Jude* v. 14, 15. Thousand of his Saints to Execute Judgment, &c.

And;

And, I can now see how all this was typified by the Church of God, the Children of *Israel* being brought out of *Egypt* by a strong Hand, by terrible Judgments from Heaven. And that their Deliverance was by the Destruction of their Enemies; which, by the way, Answers all the Prophecies, that the Day of the Lord's Vengeance on the Wicked, is the time of the Redemption of his Chosen, see *Isa.* 63 and 4. and all the other Prophecies describing this Day of Terror.

And by this pouring out of the Spirit of God, and it being made evident how our Lord Jesus, in this his Triumphant State, answers the utmost Hopes that the Jews could have of their Glorious Messiah; I can easily conceive how the Jews shall be called, and the Fulness of the *Gentiles* brought in, and all be made one Flock, under one Shepherd Christ Jesus, the great Bishop of our Souls.

In short, I now, since I have had this Key, can scarce dip any where into the Old and New Testaments; but I find something pointing at this Restitution of all things.

And since there has been a great Apostacy from the Christian Purity; and there are Wars, and Rumours of Wars; and that the time is come, in which there is scarce Faith on Earth, of our Lord's Appearance to restore all things, all which was to precede the time of his coming, I could not see any Ground to conclude, why it should not be now, as well as in the next Age, or longer.

And then finding amongst these Prophets, an Extraordinary Spirit of Prayer and Praise unto God the Gifts of Prophecy, the Gift of Exhortation, the Gift of discerning Spirits, the Gift of Languages, and the Ministration of the same Spirit unto others, already Evident, and some Earnests of the Gifts of Healing, all which were Proofs that the Holy Spirit gave in the Apostles times; I durst not take upon me to say, that this was not the Cry that was to go forth at Midnight, saying, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.*

But on the contrary, I think it my Duty to make all the hast I can, to prepare my self for his coming, that I may not have my Oyl to buy, and my Lamp to trim when I should enter in with him.

If this be not the true Cry, I am no Loser, but if it be, I am a great Gainer.

And tho in this Appearance there are some things Odd, and not according to Mans Wisdom, Yet having observed that the Alwise, has at all times appeared in a manner different from what the Wise of the World expected. And has declared that he will confound the Wisdom of the Wise, and bring to nothing the Understanding of the Prudent; and there being shining Evidences of its being from God, I durst not from some little Clouds that now and then seem to our Understandings, to darken its Lustre, conclude, that God was not in it, or take upon me, in my faint Light, to determine what the Alwise, and uncontrollable will, or will not do to us, that are worse than the Dust before him.

Sir, you'll please to pardon my Freedom, and I hope it will by this be Evident to you, that I have some Reason to think favourably of the Prophets.

Yours, &c.

F I N I S.

If this be not the true City, I am no longer, but I have
be I am a great Gainer.
And tho' in this Appearance there are some things
and not according to those Willows. Yet having observed
that the Alwile, has at all times appeared in a manner
different from what the Will of the World expects
And has declared that he will conclude the Will of
the Will, and bring to nothing the Understanding of
Prudent; and there being nothing I think of as being
from God, I shut not from some little Clouds that now
and then seem to our Understanding, to darken the Light
conclude, that God was not in it, or else that it is
my false Light, to determine what the Alwile has
trouble will, or will not do to us, that are worth
the Dust before him.
So, you'll please to pardon my Freedom, and I hope
it will by this be Evident to you, that I have some Reason
to think favourably of the Prophet.



FINIS

